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CURRENT TOPICS.

President Cleveland's veto of the Bland Signiorage Bill has done much to re-establish his reputation for political courage and strength of character, but it has probably still further injured him with his own party. His use of the veto is praised by many Republican leaders and condemned by many Democrats. While this fact is easily explained by those who understand the peculiar relations of the respective parties to the silver interest, it sets the character of the President once more in a very favourable light. His message is somewhat lengthy, but the gist of his strong reason for vetoing the Bill is found in the criticism that it contained no provision for maintaining the parity between gold and silver. The necessity for maintaining this parity is the firm rock on which Mr. Cleveland has planted his foot from the first. In

order to restore and maintain this parity, the Sherman Silver Bill was repealed. Now that the disturbing effects of that repeal have been pretty well discounted in the country and its beneficial results are beginning to manifest themselves, he would have been extremely short-sighted or weak to have permitted, so long as it was in his power to prevent it by the use of his prerogative, the fruits of that struggle to be lost through the injection of a new stream of silver into the national currency. Mr. Cleveland's firmness in this matter will go far to counterbalance the effects of his failure in the Hawaiian affair.

A treaty has been negotiated with China, by Secretary Gresham, on behalf of the United States, which is said to accomplish all that is demanded by the anti-Chinese sentiment of the Republic, with the consent of the Chinese rulers themselves. The treaty declares that the Government of China, in view of the sentiment of the people of the United States, "desires to prohibit the emigration of such (Chinese) laborers from China to the United States." It is provided that such emigration shall be absolutely prohibited, save in regard to certain exceptional cases which are enumerated. The exceptions cover officials, teachers, students, merchants and persons travelling for curiosity or pleasure; also any registered Chinese laborer who may have a lawful wife, parent or child, or property to the value of one thousand dollars, in the United States, on the observance by these parties respectively of certain legal formalities which are carefully specified. It is provided that the Chinese Government may enact similar prohibitions with reference to American citizens residing in their country. Many questions will suggest themselves to the thoughtful on-looker. Has this humiliating treaty been made freely by the Chinese, or under the compulsion of conscious inability to enforce existing treaty rights and the unwritten laws of international comity? How can the Chinese or any other Government discharge such an obligation save by some intolerably oppressive passport system? Does the United States bind itself to enact and enforce a similar prohibition of its subjects emigrating to China, if requested to do so? Can it do so, by the use of any means available under a constitutional and popular government, even if it honestly makes the attempt?

The difficulty which has arisen between the British and Canadian Governments,

touching the Copyright Act, passed by the Dominion Parliament several years ago, which the Government of the Mother Country will not permit to become law, illustrates a kind of friction which would almost certainly arise under any system of Imperial Federation. Without going into the details of the controversy, for which our space is inadequate, the two salient points seem to be the apparent inability of the British Government and its Committee to understand the peculiarities of the Canadian position, and the seeming necessity that the interests of Canada be sacrificed to those of the great nations represented in the Berne Convention. As an example of the former may be quoted the argument of the British Committee of experts to whom the question was referred, that twelve months might be allowed as a reasonable time to the copyright holder for cheap reproduction, and that during that time the Imperial copyright should hold good. The reply so well made by Sir John Thompson, at once suggests itself to every Canadian who understands the situation: "In less than twelve months the Canadian market would be flooded with American reprints and the sale of the book would be over." It must be admitted that, under the circumstances, the difficulties in the way of the British Government assenting to the Canadian Act are serious, from their point of view. But none the less the refusal of permission to make her own copyright laws is an interference with Canadian interests, as well as with her autonomy, to which our Parliament and people will find it hard to submit. The way out of the difficulty does not yet appear.

Serious dissatisfaction is said to have been caused at Washington by the cable report that the Bill now before the British Parliament for the carrying out of the rules prescribed by the Paris Arbitrator contains a clause exempting from the penalties provided in the Bill any sealing vessel which can be shown to have left port before the Bill had become law and been announced as such. This seems only fair and in accordance with the modern spirit, which objects as a rule to retroactive legislation, when heavy penalties are involved. At the same time, it is easy to understand the disappointment and even resentment of the Americans, should the result be that the protection granted by the decision of the Paris tribunal is lost for the present season in consequence of British delay in passing the required legislation. But, see.